

# GOV AFFAIRS

## GENERAL LEGISLATIVE MATTERS



### REGIONALISM CONFERENCE FEATURES SOUTHWEST COMPACT

On September 22-24, SCAG Regional Council Member Greg Pettis, as chair of the Southwest Compact Task Force, participated in the Texas Conference on Regionalism in San Antonio, Texas. At the

*See Page 2 Sidebar*



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### Federal Appropriations

On July 24, 2004, the House Appropriations Committee passed an \$89.9 billion Transportation-Treasury Appropriations spending plan for Fiscal Year 2005, HR 5025. The House report anticipates \$34.6 billion for the administration and operation of the Federal Highway Administration in FY 2005, not quite \$1 billion more than the fiscal year 2004 enacted level. In the absence of TEA-21 reauthorization language, the House committee proposed to continue funding levels for bus and rail transit under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) at \$7.249 billion, the same as FY 2004 levels. For Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) operations, the bill makes an appropriation of \$14 billion. The original bill contained \$478 million for transportation research projects including \$239 million in transportation research funds slated for Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) activities.

The House Appropriations Committee recommended a funding level of \$138 million for the National Corridor Planning and Border Infrastructure Programs and notes the establishment of the coordinated border infrastructure program to support the safe movement of goods and people across the US/Mexican and US/Canadian borders. The original House bill provided \$137.7 million for the operations and administration of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and \$11 million for the development, demonstration, and implementation of high-speed rail technologies.

The full Senate Appropriations Committee took up the Senate version of the Transportation-Treasury bill on September 14. The Senate version of the bill appropriates \$35.8 billion for Federal Aid Highways and \$13.913 billion for the FAA. Under FRA, the bill appropriates \$1.437 billion, \$6.608 million below the FY04 level and \$348.653 million above the Administration's request. In this Senate version of the appropriations bill, the FTA would receive \$7.758 billion, \$492 million above the FY04 enacted level and \$492 million above the Administration's request.

## SPECIFIC BILLS

The following is an update on bills monitored by SCAG:

### Signed by the Governor

#### ▲ AB 1971 (Lowenthal) Air Pollution: Marine Terminals – SUPPORT

Relates to requirements that each marine terminal in the state operate in a manner that does not cause the engines on trucks to idle or queue for more than 30 minutes while waiting to load or unload at the terminal.

#### ▲ AB 2158 (Lowenthal) Housing Elements: Regional Housing Need – SUPPORT

RHNA reform bill from the Lowenthal Working Group.

#### ▲ AB 2348 (Mullin) Housing Element: Regional Housing Need – SUPPORT

RHNA reform bill from the Lowenthal Working Group.

*See bottom of Page 2*



## **SOUTHWEST COMPACT**

*Continued from Page 1*

conference, hosted by the Alamo Area Council of Governments, Councilmember Pettis spoke on the Southwest Compact and developing a more efficient intermodal goods movement system along the U.S./Mexico Border. He focused on the system's objective of being the connection of the East-West trade route along the U.S./Mexico border with a seamless freight transportation system the "Southwest Passage". This system would provide the backbone for a super-regional goods movement network linking southwestern industries with the World Market. It would also have the side benefit of mitigating adverse impacts of trade growth including traffic congestion, air pollution, vehicle delays at grade crossings and noise in residential areas.

## **LOBBYISTS' UPDATE**

### **C2 Group**

The House and Senate could be getting close to approving a six-year reauthorization bill this year. The next three weeks will make clear whether Congress can push through new legislation before the end of the year. If it cannot complete a bill before the November 2 election, Congress might have one more opportunity before the end of the year in a lame duck session. The highway safety, transit and motor carrier programs are extended through September 30, and the federal-aid highway program is extended through September 24th. Appropriators have been working on clearing a transportation appropriations bill simultaneously.

The House Appropriations Committee passed an \$89.9 billion Transportation-Treasury Appropriations spending plan for Fiscal Year 2005, HR 5025 and the full Senate Appropriations Committee marked up its version of the bill on September 14.

### **Bauer Government Relations**

The Legislative session adjourned at the end of August until after the November elections. The end of session this year was notable for what did not happen. The past three years saw a flurry of last minute amendments and major legislation sent to Governor Davis after little public airing. This year, Governor Schwarzenegger stated that he would not sign last minute legislation, and for the most part, last minute amendments occurred at a reduced rate. The RIGHT legislation was the topic of a great deal of discussion in the waning weeks of the legislative session. Although consensus could not be reached among all of the interested parties, it is clear that design-build authority for infrastructure projects will continue to be an on-going subject matter. The discussion regarding privately-financed projects using tolls and other revenue streams has not matured to the point that the legislature feels comfortable taking action. The Bay Bridge cost-overruns were a major topic on the table at the end of session. Bay Area Legislators believe that the state should pick up a share of the cost overruns. This was met with fierce opposition among Southern California legislators. The Administration has called for independent audits to determine what is driving the cost overruns and has tabled discussions of the matter until after the elections. We are currently awaiting the Governor's action on a number of bills that SCAG is tracking with interest. As action takes place we will keep you informed.

## **SPECIFIC BILLS *continued***

### **▲ AB 2628 (Pavley) Vehicles: Preferential Lanes – OPPOSE**

Permits certain hybrid vehicles to use HOV lanes.

### **Vetoed by the Governor**

### **▲ AB 2006 (Nunez) Electrical Restructuring Public Utility Commission – SUPPORT**

Requires the Public Utilities Commission to hold a hearing to review any settlement agreement that has a certain ratepayer obligation requirement. Requires electrical corporations to file a long-term integrated resource plan. Requires the commission to submit a plan to streamline the transmission siting process. Requires the Independent System Operator to establish resource adequacy requirements to ensure generating capacity to serve load requirements and to meet peak demands.